

REMARKS

Favorable consideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 4, 5, 7 and 14-18 are presently pending in this application, and Claim 18 having been amended by this supplemental amendment.

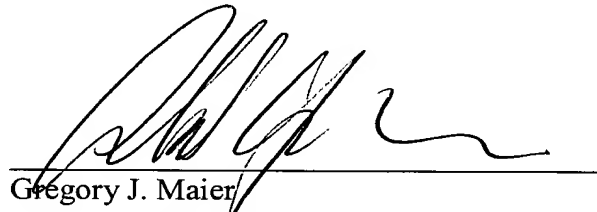
First, Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the courtesy of the telephone communication by the Examiner on November 20, 2003, at which time the Examiner has indicated that the present application is in condition for allowance except that Claims 17 and 18 recite duplicate subject matters. Pursuant to the following telephone communication on November 24, 2003, Claim 18 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter recited in Claim 1, 4, 5 and 7 as Claim 7 was indicated as including allowable subject matter in the previous Office Action.

Application No. 09/972,866
Reply to Office Action of August 1, 2003
Supplemental Amendment

In light of the discussions held during the telephone interviews and prior indication of allowable subject matter and in view of the amendments presented above, no further issues are believed to be outstanding and thus the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance. Applicants therefore respectfully request an early action favorable to that effect.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gregory J. Maier', is written over a horizontal line.

Gregory J. Maier
Attorney of Record
Registration No. 25,599

Customer Number
22850

Tel: (703) 413-3000
Fax: (703) 413 -2220
(OSMMN 08/03)

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Akihiro Yamazaki
Registration No. 46,155